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ABSTRACT

Newly discovered transcriptions of 87 of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt's women-only press conferences held from 1933 to 1945 make possible an examination of the objectives, topics, and value of these conferences. By holding the conferences, Mrs. Roosevelt attributed to women an important function in the political communication process, and at the same time helped to secure the status and bolster the confidence of women reporters. The topics of the conferences were political issues related to women and legislation, and social and personal life at the White House. She also used the conferences to defuse criticism leveled at herself and her family, including the President, and to clarify statements made by him. At the time, male journalists felt that these conferences reduced the dignity of the First Lady, provided little legitimate news, and compromised reportorial objectivity. The transcripts reveal that Mrs. Roosevelt maintained traditional propriety, though the conferences did become a bit chatty, and that reporters occasionally would shield the First Lady. All in all, the sex-segregated press conferences were a useful device for Mrs. Roosevelt, enabling her to establish herself as an important figure, to promote the New Deal, and to improve the status of American women. (JL)

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History Division

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The Press Conferences of Eleanor Roosevelt

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The Press Conferences of Eleanor Roosevelt

Abstract

This paper examines the institution of Eleanor Roosevelt's unprecedented White House press conferences by studying newly-located transcripts of 87 conferences. It concludes these conferences, which Mrs. Roosevelt limited to women reporters only, were not trivial events, as male critics charged. Instead it argues the conferences played an important function in calling attention to Mrs. Roosevelt as a somewhat conservative role model for women in modern American society.

The Press Conferences of Eleanor Roosevelt

During her 12 years as First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt held more than 300 White House press conferences for women reporters only.[1] These gatherings were criticized in the male-dominated press of the day as gossipy, "girlish" sessions of limited news value. For example, Delbert Clark, Washington bureau manager of the New York Times, accused Mrs. Roosevelt of retarding the professional growth of women journalists by "coddling the girls."[2]

Most women journalists, on the other hand, praised Mrs. Roosevelt effusively for helping other women by excluding men. Ruby A. Black became the first woman to be hired by the United Press when Mrs. Roosevelt insisted on coverage by women alone. Black credited the First Lady with bringing "jobs to jobless newspaper women, raises to some who had been poorly paid, (and) recognition to those who had been shoved off in a corner..."[3]

For years it has been difficult to assess the validity of these conflicting views on the conferences because it was thought no verbatim record of them existed. While shorthand notes were taken on the conferences by Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary, Malvina Thompson Scheider, these

were not preserved with the rest of Mrs. Roosevelt's papers (with the exception of full or partial transcripts of five conferences made from the Scheider notes).[4]

This article describes and evaluates Mrs. Roosevelt's press conferences in the light of new-found material - transcripts of all or part of 87 of the conferences held from 1933 to 1945. In her autobiography Mrs. Roosevelt wrote that records of the conferences were made by two reporters, whom she neglected to name.[5] She noted one used shorthand and the other was "extremely quick" with longhand notes.[6]

The author identified these two women respectively as Martha Strayer (1889 to 1968) and Bess Furman Armstrong (1894 to 1969). Strayer's shorthand pads were found at the archives of the University of Wyoming where her papers were sent after her death.[7] The author arranged to have them transcribed, making use in part of a typescript for a book on the press conferences which Strayer was preparing at the time of her death.[8] Typed notes on some of the press conferences also were located in the Furman papers at the Library of Congress.[9] Additional notes were found in the personal papers of Ruby A. Black.[10]

Strayer, a reporter for the now-defunct Washington

Daily News for more than 40 years, covered most of Mrs. Roosevelt's White House press conferences. A native of Steubenville, Ohio, Strayer learned shorthand in her youth, using it to get a secretarial job on the Daily News. After walking 25 blocks through five-foot-high snowdrifts to cover the collapse of a theater roof in 1921, she attained her goal of being made a reporter.[11] She customarily took shorthand notes on all the news stories she covered.

Furman, born in Danbury, Nebraska, came to Washington in 1929 as a staff writer for the Associated Press. She covered Mrs. Roosevelt's press conferences regularly until leaving the AP in 1936. She later returned to press conference coverage sporadically, first as a free-lance writer, then as assistant chief of the magazine division, Office of War Information during the first part of World War II. From 1943 on she attended as a reporter for the New York Times where she worked until 1961.

The 87 full or partial transcripts are not equally representative of the 12-year period. Thus the material does not lend itself to a content analysis, so a descriptive, narrative approach has been taken. A breakdown of the number of transcripts by year follows: 1933, 11; 1934, 6; 1935, 3; 1936, 5; 1937, 1; 1938, 6; 1939, 15; 1940, 6;

1941, 14; 1942, 15; 1943, 1; 1944, 2; and 1945, 2. Five of the transcripts for 1942 are of conferences held at the Office of Civil Defense when Mrs. Roosevelt acted as assistant director there.

In analyzing this material three questions have been asked: One, what were Mrs. Roosevelt's objectives in holding these conferences and how were they related to the exclusion of men reporters? Two, what topics were covered in the conferences? Three, to what degree was contemporary criticism of the conferences justified? In conclusion, the paper will examine how effective the conferences appeared to be in enhancing Mrs. Roosevelt's own status.

Objectives and Women-Only Admission Policies

The first press conference held was on March 6, 1933, just two days after Franklin D. Roosevelt's first inauguration as President. The transcript gives Mrs. Roosevelt's stated reasons for holding this meeting, attended by some 30 newspaperwomen, mainly feature writers and society reporters. One was purely pragmatic. She told the women it would save her time to "see you all together once a week."[12]

A more lofty reason involved her concept of a newspaperwoman's role, which she defined as "leading the women in the country to form a general attitude of mind and thought."[13] The idea is largely to make an understanding between the White House and the general public, she explained, calling the reporters "interpreters to the women of the country as to what goes on politically in the legislative national life, and also what the social and personal life is at the White House."[14]

In attributing to the women an important function in the political communication process, Mrs. Roosevelt may have been consciously trying to bolster their self-esteem. In her autobiography she stated a major reason for the conference was to insure that women reporters, hard-pressed to keep their jobs during the Depression, would be able to get news not available to men competitors, as well as to have an opportunity to report news "of special interest and value to the women of the country."[15] Mrs. Roosevelt credited Lorena A. Hickok, an Associated Press reporter who became a close friend, with giving her the idea for the conferences, partly as a way of helping women journalists.[16]

By meeting the press Mrs. Roosevelt departed radically

from the customary aloofness displayed by previous First Ladies, who embraced the Victorian idea that women should not seek publicity. Her immediate predecessor, Mrs. Herbert Hoover, refused to provide journalists with news, "either directly or indirectly," as one woman reporter put it, rejecting appeals for even such innocuous items as the guest list for White House dinners or the description of her dresses.[17] Before her, Mrs. Calvin Coolidge received specific orders from her husband not to speak to reporters for any type of quotation.[18]

Mrs. Roosevelt repeatedly upheld her decision to exclude men. The transcripts show this issue arose, for example, on June 16, 1938, when a woman reporter said, "There are some gentlemen of the press who very much would love to come to a press conference and see what you do."[19] Mrs. Roosevelt responded, "...there are things that I consider are of special interest to women, and I consider that women will read about them better and will understand them better....the whole reason and object for my having a press conference is to have it for women writers."[20]

In planning the conferences Mrs. Roosevelt obtained initial guidance from Louis M. Howe, a former newspaperman who was President Roosevelt's chief advisor and Stephen T. Early, who was Franklin D. Roosevelt's press secretary.[21] Still

they developed primarily as a women-only operation with Mrs. Roosevelt's secretary, Malvina Thompson Scheider, handling administrative detail.[22] Before World War II the number of writers admitted grew to 130 representatives of daily and weekly newspapers, press associations, radio stations, magazines and government publicity bureaus, a testimony to the popularity of the gatherings with newswomen.[23]

When security considerations prompted a tightening of admission standards after war broke out, administration was turned over to the newswomen themselves who organized as Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association. The group cut off admission to part-time journalists, listing about 50 members when it disbanded in 1945 following President Roosevelt's death.[24] It rejected an application from Gordon Cole, of the liberal New York newspaper P.M., after Mrs. Roosevelt stated she might end the conferences if men were admitted because in that case "the President is the proper person to give out general information."[25]

With the exception of Elizabeth May Craig, a correspondent for Maine newspapers, and a few other advocates of equal rights, the women journalists backed Mrs. Roosevelt's stand.[26] Only once, at Early's insistence, did she agree to permit male journalists at a White House press conference - on

her return from South Pacific war zones in 1943.[27] Men, however, attended her press conferences away from Washington and at the Office of Civil Defense.

Topics Covered

Studies of the transcripts show that Mrs. Roosevelt indeed covered those areas which she declared the province of women journalists at the first press conference: political issues related to women and legislation, and social and personal life at the White House. Often it was difficult to draw a line between the political and the social.

For example, on May 4, 1939, a reporter asked an apparently trivial question, whether artists performing at a state dinner for the visiting King and Queen of England would meet the guests. Mrs. Roosevelt replied, according to the transcript, that the artists "are always presented to ... the chief guests."[28] This meant Marian Anderson, a Negro singer, would be presented to the King and Queen - a controversial move in a period of legal segregation and a gesture of administration support for improving the status of Negroes.

Believing that she should not "trespass on (the

President's) prerogatives," Mrs. Roosevelt originally told the newspaperwomen she would not discuss pending legislation or answer purely political questions.[29] The transcripts provide conclusive proof she paid only lip service to this apolitical stance. Sample comments on legislation:

*July 6, 1933 - Mrs. Roosevelt endorsed a constitutional amendment to outlaw child labor: "To those of us interested in the better development of our children, this must be ratified."[30]

*June 16, 1938 - Mrs. Roosevelt expressed support for passage of legislation to regulate wages and hours: "...I'm glad to have anything passed which will start us on our way to that type of legislation."[31]

*Feb. 13, 1939 - Mrs. Roosevelt argued for passage of the Wagner bill to admit 10,000 German refugee children to the United States: "I think it a wise way to do a humanitarian act. Other nations take their share of the child refugees, and it seems a fair thing to do."[32]

"May 4, 1939 - Mrs. Roosevelt opposed bills pending in 20 states to prohibit married women from working: "We like many other nations today are facing a possible change

in the status of women. It is of great moment to us not to let this happen."[33]

*Sept. 27, 1939 - Mrs. Roosevelt favored amending the Neutrality Act to allow the United States to lift an embargo on selling munitions to warring nations, although she minimized the importance of her opinion:

> I would like to see the embargo removed, because I feel that we are in greater danger, looking back over our past experience in the last war, with the embargo than without it. But that, after all, is up to Congress, and I don't think that my opinion is that much important.[34]

*Jan. 12, 1942 - Mrs. Roosevelt opposed a bill to turn civil defense programs over to the Army: "...civilian defense is really not entirely an Army question....It comes from the knowledge that daily conditions can be met, that you have a say in meeting them, and that you have a part in the defense of your community and the country."[35]

*April 6, 1942 - Mrs. Roosevelt declined to support legislation for a 40-hour week for farm workers: "It would be much better done through negotiation than through changing laws."[36]

The political aspects of the press conferences covered far more ground than simple stands on legislation. For example, the transcripts show Mrs. Roosevelt brought in prominent women from the federal bureaucracy to speak to the reporters: Mary Anderson, head of the Women's Bureau; Dr. Martha Eliot, medical head of the Children's Bureau; Dr. Louise Stanley, chief of the Bureau of Home Economics, and Florence Kerr, assistant administrator of the Works Progress Administration, among others. Such guests naturally pictured the work of their agencies positively, giving a boost to New Deal programs.

Since most of the newspaperwomen were assigned to women's pages and society news, they focused on Mrs. Roosevelt's personal and social life rather than on politics. The conferences opened with a detailed list of the First Lady's engagements, occasionally picturing cooperation between President and Mrs. Roosevelt in state duties. For instance, on Feb. 27, 1939, she discussed entertaining "three Albanians" at tea in the Green Room and added, "I haven't yet asked the President, but I shouldn't be surprised if he should come over to see them..."[37] No hint of marital stress ever appears in the transcripts.

Reports on her travels and activities carried political overtones, stressing the need for social reforms. The transcripts contain accounts of Mrs. Roosevelt's tours through institutions in the District of Columbia - public hospitals, clinics, homes for the aged and juvenile facilities, most of which she described as appalling. For example, after visiting the children's floor at the Gallinger municipal hospital, she reported the "nursing is totally inadequate" and recommended a visit by a Congressional committee along with "possibly increased appropriations."[38]

On May 15, 1936, she astounded the newspaperwomen with plans for an unusual White House festivity - a garden party for inmates of the National Training School for Girls, a District reformatory for Negro women aged 14 to 21. After describing the health of the inmates, many of whom had venereal diseases, Mrs. Roosevelt pointed out "the place has had no program to fit the girls to earn a living except doing the work of the institution...."[39] She said if they were to be rehabilitated, "they need much more than they are getting," including "an occasional good time," which the party would furnish.[40]

The press conferences offered Mrs. Roosevelt a priceless forum to defuse criticism leveled at herself and her

family, including the President. Illustrations from the transcripts:

*Dec. 19, 1938 - Mrs. Roosevelt upheld the right of a President's family, including his wife, to carry on careers and make money even though living in the White House. Answering critics of her position as a director of her son James' insurance company, she asked, "What kind of people the country wanted in the White House....Women who give up everything?....But you don't elect the woman nor the family when you elect a man President."[41]

*Nov. 7, 1940 - Mrs. Roosevelt denied she had amassed personal wealth as a result of her newspaper column, "My Day," and her lecture tours while First Lady. Her earnings emerged as an issue in Roosevelt's unprecedented third term presidential campaign but she refused comment until he gained re-election. Then she confirmed she had made "a great deal" of money but given much away: "I have had the feeling that every penny I have made should be in circulation....I have...less principal than I had in 1933, when we came down here....I pay income tax on everything."[42]

*April 25, 1939 - Mrs. Roosevelt refuted a charge made before the Senate labor subcommittee that she had been "stupid" in trying to show profiteers were blocking low-cost housing, declaring: "I have no idea what they are alluding to. I can't remember the slightest connection which I would consider as having any relationship with that."[43]

She also used the press conferences to clarify statements made by her husband, including his 1940 campaign promise not to send American boys into a foreign war. When a reporter commented, "A number of people seem to be surprised by your statement that the President never said he would keep us out of war," Mrs. Roosevelt replied, "(In) most of the things I have read and remembered hearing him say, he has always said 'unless we are attacked.' I don't see how anyone understood it any other way."[44]

Yet she emphasized she spoke as an individual, not as her husband's mouthpiece. According to the transcripts, she denied he had ever tried to tell her what to say in the "My Day" column, adding, "...I have never tried to influence the President on anything he ever did, and I certainly have never known him to try to influence me."[45]

Mrs. Roosevelt's memory may have been fuzzy, or perhaps she deliberately wished to mislead. Evidence exists at least one time Mrs. Roosevelt ran material in the column at the President's request. In May, 1936, she informed Hickok that she had quoted part of a Hickok letter to her without attribution in a column "at Franklin & Roy Howard's (Howard was head of the Scripps-Howard newspaper chain) suggestion."[46] (The quoted material from Hickok, then a confidential investigator of relief projects for the Roosevelt administration, concerned unemployment in the steel industry due to automation brought by Republican industrialists, not New Deal policies.) Mrs. Roosevelt wrote Hickok the President "wants me to be whipping boy & tho' he can't bring the question out he wants it out."[47]

The transcripts give no indication, however, that Mrs. Roosevelt acted for anyone other than herself in holding the conferences. The range of topics repeatedly covered - New Deal programs of social services, concern for youth, including support for the alleged Red-tinged American Youth Congress, interest in women's role in society, efforts to mobilize women for World War II - all embraced Mrs. Roosevelt's long-standing belief in humanitarian reforms and citizen participation in democracy. On occasion

she made statements contrary to administration policy, the transcripts reveal, as on Feb. 9, 1939, when she expressed distaste for the "vindictiveness" of peace terms, imposed by Gen. Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. The United States officially was neutral.[48]

Contemporary Criticism

Criticism of the press conferences by male journalists revolved around three points: (1) It was inappropriate for Mrs. Roosevelt to meet with reporters, thereby weakening the dignity of the position of First Lady; (2) Little legitimate news emerged from them, and (3) The women attending formed a close attachment to her and protected her from adverse publicity, weakening their own reportorial objectivity. As Mary Hornaday, who covered the press conferences for the Christian Science Monitor, recalled years later, "Mostly the men preferred to ignore Mrs. Roosevelt and her views."[49] Reflecting this attitude, Byron Price, AP Washington bureau manager, predicted, totally erroneously, that the conferences would last less than six months.[50]

Examination of the transcripts permits evaluation

of the criticism. On the dignity issue, the transcripts prove Mrs. Roosevelt conducted herself with traditional propriety. Flanked by two trusted assistants, Scheider and Edith B. Helm, White House social secretary, Mrs. Roosevelt kept control of the conferences, initially allowing direct quotations only when Scheider provided a transcript.[51] While she relaxed this stipulation during World War II, she requested reporters still seek permission: "...just simply say, 'Is this all right to quote?'"[52]

If questions touched on personal matters Mrs. Roosevelt disliked to discuss, she showed her displeasure. In the typescript Strayer noted, "She paid little or no attention to criticisms or occasionally rude comments about herself."[53] But she "always took on an edge to her voice when asked any unwelcome questions about the Roosevelt children," such as this one in the transcript of April 25, 1939: "There was a report that somebody in Warrenton (Virginia) was going to divorce her husband so she could marry Franklin, Jr."[54] According to Strayer, "she had no answer."[55]

The press conferences, however, sometimes took on the intimate, chatty atmosphere of a sorority house, as reporters, casting about for feature material, quizzed her about her wardrobe, grooming and daily life. The

transcript for Jan. 31, 1939, records the women, seeking to explain Mrs. Roosevelt's boundless energy, delved into her sleeping and grooming habits, eliciting the intelligence she read in bed until falling asleep and "never had a facial in my life, because I have never had time."[56]

Mrs. Roosevelt discouraged emphasis on her clothes, baffling reporters accustomed to waxing eloquent over the dress of prominent women since editors believed this pleased both the women and ready-to-wear advertisers, Strayer observed. The transcripts show Mrs. Roosevelt often cut the subject off with a sentence or two, as when she was voted one of the "ten best dressed women of 1934: "Was I? I didn't know it," she said.[58]

Tidbits of this type scarcely stopped the presses, but sometimes the press conferences did provide scoops for the women reporters. Male reporters stopped jeering at the conferences as news sources when Mrs. Roosevelt announced on two different occasions that alcoholic beverages were returning to White House tables. This made front-page headlines following the end of Prohibition.[59]

According to Black, Mrs. Roosevelt offered to hold a special press conference in January, 1934, on the White House policy of serving liquor as soon as the President

signed a bill repealing Prohibition in Washington.[60] The President rejected this suggestion and the announcement was made at a regular weekly session. When one society editor raced to a telephone to break the story before the conference ended, contrary to Mrs. Roosevelt's wishes, she let representatives of the three press associations use telephones in her living quarters so they would not be scooped.[61]

Because of her position, as well as her unprecedented activities, Mrs. Roosevelt's views on the roles of women often made headlines, as when she expressed opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment sponsored by the National Woman's Party. The transcripts show she spoke out against it at one of her first conferences in 1933 and at one of the last in 1945.[62] She held it would interfere with protective legislation needed by unskilled, unorganized women who "work at anything until they marry," not seeing far enough ahead "either to be unionized or to prepare themselves for better jobs."[63]

Since Black and some of the other women strongly supported the National Woman's Party, Mrs. Roosevelt's position tended to disprove allegations by men reporters that the newspaperwomen shielded her from adverse

publicity. A transcript for Feb. 27, 1939, records Mrs. Roosevelt's upbraiding of New York Times reporter Winifred Mallon (described by Furman as a "rabid Woman's Partyer") for an article claiming Mrs. Roosevelt had been responsible for the appointment of an anti-Woman's Party advocate to the Inter-American Commission of Women and two men to the Interstate Commerce Commission: "...I have never suggested anybody for any office....It is so interesting to me, Miss Mallon, that when you have an opportunity to talk to me here at these press conferences, you don't ask me, instead of printing mere rumors."[64]

But the transcripts offer other evidence supporting critics' charges that the women protected the First Lady. Questions sometimes seem apologetic: For instance, on Oct. 27, 1941, when Mrs. Roosevelt was accused of snubbing the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, a reporter asked, "Have they been invited for any day when you would be here? If you don't want to say anything, that's all right."[65] Mrs. Roosevelt chose to reply at length, explaining a lecture commitment in Chicago would keep her from entertaining the couple in Washington.

The tone of the questions changed dramatically when the conferences were opened to men at the Office of Civil

Defense. Then she was hit with questions such as: "Will you confirm or deny the accuracy of a newspaper prediction that you...will resign from Civilian Defense?"[66] Still it was a woman reporter, Christine Sadler, of the Washington Post, who uncovered Mrs. Roosevelt's hiring of a friend, Mayris Chaney, to teach dancing in air raid shelters, an incongruous move that led to the First Lady's resignation from the civil defense post.[67]

Effectiveness of the Conferences

In conclusion, the study of the transcripts proves the sex-segregated conferences a useful device for Mrs. Roosevelt. They enabled her to provide exclusive material for women reporters to use in reaching women readers, and in the process establish herself as an important figure. The transcripts show Mrs. Roosevelt felt secure in talking to other women - secure enough to go off-the-record and entertain the group with the story of a "nasty little photographer" who had hounded her in Chicago.[68] Strayer noted she was rarely on the "defensive," except during the conferences at the Office of Civil Defense.[69]

Often Mrs. Roosevelt acted the part of an instructor,

as when she lectured the journalists on teaching other women how to read the newspaper (June 15, 1933) and use a salutary new product, dried skim milk (May 7, 1935).[70] Furman compared the conferences to a "schoolroom," a metaphor more apt than the inference by men reporters Mrs. Roosevelt served as a patron saint. This stemmed from a picture of an early conference showing newspaperwomen clustered on the floor at her feet, leading male competitors to dub them the "incense burners."[72]

In return for the newswomen's devotion, Mrs. Roosevelt arranged special treats, presenting the women to the King and Queen of England in 1939 and scheduling a meeting with Madame Chiang Kai-chek in 1943.[73] The newspaperwomen were not always pleased with what she provided, sometimes accusing her of being a journalistic rival. When one asked if she was "going to scoop us" in covering the King and Queen, Mrs. Roosevelt reassured her: "You can write what you want to write - I have to be very careful."[74]

The press conferences undoubtedly provided a useful tool for the New Deal. They gave visibility to the administration relief efforts for women, but they upheld their essentially conservative character, which did not challenge women's subordinate status. Conservatism

emerged in another area, too -- Mrs. Roosevelt's ideas on religion in public schools. She argued at one conference on the need for school prayers: "A prayer could be devised that no one could object to."[75]

The transcripts convey the moderation of Mrs. Roosevelt's concepts on women's issues - married women should not be barred from working but most women needed more self-development before they could compete as equals with men. She expressed herself succinctly in discussing women in the military and defense work during World War II. According to a transcript of April 29, 1942, she never foresaw "a woman admiral" and believed most women in defense jobs would quit to marry after the war, though those "who are very good and really like their work will probably stay in work of some kind."[76]

Certainly the press conferences enhanced her own status as a spokeswoman and role model for millions of American women. In a sense they exemplify what Daniel Boorstin has called a "pseudo-event" - an activity created to make an idea, policy or act seem important. The conference format helped make what she had to say newsworthy, although it did not always fit the traditional news definitions of conflict and controversy. Far from

being trivial, as male critics charged, the conferences called attention to American women, thus granting them the status of persons with access to the media, even though a basically conservative message was projected, through the medium of an extraordinary individual.

Notes

[1]Eleanor Roosevelt appointment books, 1933 to 1945, Eleanor Roosevelt papers (hereafter referred to as ER papers), Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York (hereafter referred to as FDRL). The appointment books for 1933 to 1944 are in Box 3000 and for 1945 in Box 3001. A breakdown of the total number, 348, by year, according to the appointment books: 1933, 29; 1934, 28; 1935, 30; 1936, 24; 1937, 24; 1938, 21; 1939, 27; 1940, 25; 1941, 30; 1942, 33; 1943, 36; 1944, 28; 1945, 13. Press engagements crossed out in the books have been omitted from the tabulations. Press conferences in early 1942 were held at the Office of Civil Defense, not the White House.

[2]Delbert Clark, Washington Dateline (New York: Stokes, [illegible], p. 217.

[3]Ruby A. Black, "'New Deal' for News Women in Capital," Editor & Publisher, Feb. 10, 1934, p. 11.

[4]Most of Mrs. Roosevelt's personal papers are preserved at FDRL. It has press conference transcripts for Feb. 27, 1935, and Feb. 24, 1943, in the ER Topical File, Box 2997. A press statement of April 23, 1934, is in the ER Speech and Article File, Box 3026, a statement of Jan. 29, 1934, in Box 3027, and a statement of Jan. 17, 1939, in Box 3037.

[5]Eleanor Roosevelt, This I Remember (New York: Harper & Bros., 1949), p. 102.

[6]Roosevelt, This I Remember, p. 103.

[7]Box 10, Strayer papers, University of Wyoming (hereafter referred to as UW). The contents of the box are designated only as "several miscellaneous shorthand notebooks."

[8]After having the notebooks copied and sent to her, the author discovered they were in Pittman shorthand, now rarely used. Fortunately William D. Mohr, an official shorthand reporter for the U.S. Senate and one of the few remaining Pittman writers in the nation, agreed to transcribe the notes. As a guide to the transcription, Mohr used the press conference materi[illegible] Strayer had transcribed for the manuscript, which is in Box 2, Strayer papers.

[9]See Furman papers, Library of Congress, hereafter referred to as LC, Box 76, notes for 1933-35; Box 77, notes for 1935-36; Box 78, notes for 1936-42 and Box 79, notes for 1943-51.

[10]These papers are in the possession of her daughter, Cornelia Little Mother[illegible], Arlington, Virginia.

[11]"Martha Strayer, Some Recollections," Washington Daily News, April 29, 1968, p. 54. See also "Martha Strayer," Washington Daily News, April 29, 1968, p. 22, and "Reporter Martha Strayer Dies," Washington Post, April 28, 1968, p. D6.

[12]Typescript, March 6, 1933, Box 76, Furman papers, LC.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Eleanor Roosevelt, This I Remember, p. 102.

[16]Ibid. See also Maurine Beasley, "Lorena A. Hickok: Journalistic Influence on Eleanor Roosevelt," Journalism Quarterly 57 (Summer 1980), pp. 281-286.

[17]Frances Parkinson Keyes, Capital Kaleidoscope: The Story of a Washington Hostess (New York: Harper & Bros. 1937), p. 183.

[18]Ishbel Ross, Ladies of the Press: The Story of Women in Journalism by an Insider (New York: Harper & Bros., 1936), p. 313.

[19]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, June 16, 1938, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[20]Ibid.

[21]For a full discussion of Early's role see Betty H. Winfield, "Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association: The First Lady Shines a Light," Journalism History 8 (Summer 1981), pps. 54-55, 63-67.

[22]Ibid., p. 64.

[23]See list of newspaperwomen eligible to attend Mrs. Roosevelt's press conferences as of June 18, 1941, Box 6, Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association papers, FDRL.

[24]See list of members of Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association as of Jan. 1, 1945, Box 5, Eleanor Roosevelt Press Conference Association papers, FDRL. The association ended after Bess Truman, wife of President Harry S. Truman, decided not to hold press conferences. See also minutes of association, April 26, 1945, Box 5.

[25]Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Mary Hornaday, Nov. 26, 1942, Box 2997, ER papers, FDRL. See also letter from Mary Hornaday to Eleanor Roosevelt, Nov. 25, 1942, and application from Gordon H. Cole to the standing committee, Mrs. Roosevelt's Press Conference Association, Nov. 23, 1942, Box 2997.

[26]Joseph P. Lash, Eleanor and Franklin (New York: Signet, 1973), p. 480.

[27]Eleanor Roosevelt, manuscript for Newspaperman article, February, 1945, Box 3051, ER papers, FDRL.

[28]Typescript, May 4, 1939, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[29]Roosevelt, This I Remember, p. 102. See also Ruby A. Black, Eleanor Roosevelt: A Biography (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1940), p. 157.

[30]Typescript, July 6, 1933, Box 76, Furman papers, LC.

[31]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, June 16, 1938, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[32]Typescript, Feb. 13, 1939, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[33]Typescript, May 4, 1939, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[34]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Sept. 27, 1939, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[35]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Jan. 12, 1942, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[36]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, April 6, 1942, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[37]Strayer typescript, Box 2, Strayer papers, UW, p. 140.

[38]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Jan. 17, 1939, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[39]Strayer typescript, Box 2, Strayer papers, UW, pp. 32-37.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Typescript, Dec. 19, 1938, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[42]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Nov. 7, 1940, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[43]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, April 25, 1939, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[44]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, May 13, 1941, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[45]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Sept. 27, 1939, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[46]Eleanor Roosevelt to Lorena A. Hickok, May 7, 1936, Box 2, Hickok papers, FDRL. See also Doris Faber, The Life of Lorena Hickok: E.R.'s Friend (New York: Morrow, 1980), pp. 207-8, and "My Day," (for) May 11, 1936, Box 3170, ER papers, FDRL.

[47]Roosevelt to Hickok, May 7, 1936, Box 2, Hickok papers, FDRL.

[48]Typescript, Feb. 7, 1939, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[49]Mary Hornaday, untitled manuscript on Mrs. Roosevelt's press conferences, given to the author of this paper, May 21, 1979, p. 2.

[50]Bess Furman, Washington By-Line (New York: Knopf, 1949), p. 153.

[51]Ruby A. Black, "Covering Mrs. Roosevelt," Matrix 18 (April 1933), p. 4.

[52]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, May 5, 1942, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[53]Strayer typescript, Box 2, Strayer papers, UW, p. 138.

[54]Ibid., p. 139.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Jan. 31, 1939, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[57]Strayer typescript, Box 2, Strayer papers, UW, p. 82.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Statements to the press, April 3, 1933, and Jan. 29, 1934, Box 76, Furman papers, LC.

[60]Black, "'New Deal' for News Women in Capital," p. 11.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Typescript, July 6, 1933, Box 76, Furman papers, LC.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Typescript, Feb. 27, 1939, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[65]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Oct. 27, 1941, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[66]Strayer typescript, Box 2, Strayer papers, UW, p. 209.

[67]Hornaday, untitled manuscript, p. 2.

[68]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, May 13, 1941, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[69]Strayer typescript, Box 2, Strayer papers, UW, p. 209.

[70]Typescript, June 15, 1933, and typescript, May 7, 1935, Box 76, Furman papers, Library of Congress.

[71]Furman, Washington By-Line, p. 194.

[72]Clark, Washington Dateline, p. 212.

[73]Furman Features news story, Box 78, Furman papers, LC. Also Thompson transcription, Feb. 24, 1943, Box 2997, ER papers, FDRL.

[74]Typescript, May 22, 1939, Box 78, Furman papers, LC.

[75]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, Jan. 22, 1940, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[76]Mohr transcription of Strayer shorthand notes, April 29, 1942, Box 10, Strayer papers, UW.

[77]See Daniel J. Boorstin, "From News Gathering to News Making: A Flood of Pseudo-Events" in The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America (New York: Atheneum, 1978), pp. 7-44.